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11 October 1973

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MEMORANDUM FOR: C/WH []

SUBJECT : Discussion with Mr. "Jerry" LEVINSON,
Counsel for Sub-Committee on Multi-National
Corporations of Senate Foreign Relations
Committee

1. Recently I received a call at home from Levinson (I'm not sure of the spelling) who indicated he'd like to have a chat with me. When I asked him the nature of the talk he had in mind, he was evasive but not suspiciously so, merely saying he had been told I was experienced abroad and that he'd appreciate the chance to talk to me. Aside from courtesy and curiosity, I will soon be in the market for a job, so I accepted with no reluctance - albeit perhaps with some lingering mental reservation about what was behind the call.

2. I met Levinson for lunch downtown on 3 October. He explained immediately and openly upon normal dispensing of amenities what his job was and that the committee (sub) of which he was the counsel had been charged with looking

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3. I can't say I was taken completely off guard as the possibility of some such in this day and age had not entirely escaped me, but nonetheless the boldness of the approach was a bit surprising to me.

4. It was obvious Levinson was addressing himself to CIA when he referred to "the Agency", but I had him confirm it for the record, which he did with no stuttering. He was addressing himself to me as someone who had at one time been associated with the Agency, although he did not seem to know whether I was still so associated. He also knew

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I had been connected at one time or another with both the Philippines and Latin America. He identified his source of my name only as a "journalist"; I didn't press him.

5. I philosophized a bit with him about having neither compulsions nor compunctions about talking with him, but pointed out whoever gave him my name and he were both surely aware that unless I were terribly naive or archly disaffected, I would only inform him relative to these subjects of his interest on the basis of some great moral or intellectual resolve, because the risks of one being considered disloyal or at least indiscreet must be obvious to him in view of the distinction in the two arms of government. So, while admitting to being greatly intrigued, I told him that the fact was I wouldn't tell him anything that would be of use to him. I did not make any reference in this connection to security, secrecy oaths or the like.

6. I did go ahead and chat with him nevertheless and he took advantage with social and intellectual polish to probe initially in generalities but dipping into specifics occasionally. He went into Chile, of course, using it as an example for his sphere of interest. I told him I thought the interaction he was referring to between corporations and the Agency was greatly exaggerated, that exotic publicity about the recondite spy world had created an invalid emphasis and false aura relative to such connections or influence in either direction. When the matter of policy control inevitably was brought up, I similarly deprecated the same false image that had been conjured up about a cowboy agency galloping about on the international frontier free of restraint from the constitutionally charged policy directors.

7. On the point of the legitimacy of congressional pursuit of and possession of knowledge of Agency activity, I concurred with alacrity that the Agency is bound without question to responsibility to and responsiveness to the people of the United States and thus obviously through extrapolation on a practical level to the Congress, but just as obviously on a completely practical basis it had to be executed with some recognition of the reality that in any group of [redacted], there's bound to be a couple of irresponsible fools and politicians were hardly any exception. He didn't argue.

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8. When Mr. Levinson delivered of himself on the necessity of a Congress rightly reasserting itself after a period of dormancy, I agreed on a personal basis but countered that I felt excessive swings in the pendulum would lead - had led - in countervailing reaction to an organization like the Agency running so scared that proposals for actions that were not only defensible but probably should be carried out wouldn't even be considered because of timidity induced by trepidation of being called upon to defend them to an audience with hostile preconceptions and the power to make it's opinions matter. Levinson asked if I had any specific instances of this and I told him I didn't, it was just a generalized feeling.

9. Levinson also brought up that he had noted a similarity in the operational modalities in certain sequences of events in different countries, drawing the conclusion they were

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specifics - I didn't know anything about either anyway - but pointed out that while any intelligent, knowledgeable observer could indeed catalogue patterns, one ran the risk of making an erroneous assumption of sponsorship just because of an apparent consistency of modalities, and, furthermore, erroneous assumptions on his (Levinson's) part could be very harmful in view of his client's influential position.

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11. The whole lunch was pleasant, stimulating, certainly intriguing. He paid the check. It lasted only an hour and ten minutes. Oh yes, outside and presented as an after thought, I told Mr. Levinson I was in the market for a job, so if anyone on the hill needed a boy for something other than as a witness to remember me. Said he would.



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